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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 18 October 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Gerts (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Netherlands)

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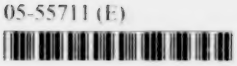

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Gerts (Netherlands), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 29: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/60/20)

1. **Mr. Williams** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey, the Stabilization and Association Process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and, in addition, Iceland and Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the major advances made in space exploration and use could contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals as well as the goals of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in particular through Earth observation and telecommunications.

2. In February 2005 the European Commission had organized an international conference to explore cooperation between space-faring and non-space-faring countries in the development of global services such as positioning, Earth observation and access to information. The outcome of that conference had helped the European Union, in cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA), create a space programme which would meet the need for international cooperation. The ENVISAT satellite, of ESA, the largest satellite ever built for Earth observation purposes, provided environmental, weather and climate protection services to more than 90 States. The ENVISAT user conference held in September 2004 in Salzburg had underlined the success of those applications.

3. The European Union remained a strong advocate of the universally accepted right of all States to explore outer space for the benefit of all mankind and stressed the responsibility of States to ensure that that right was exercised in the interests of international peace and security. It therefore welcomed the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (A/60/20). Following the successful review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) in 2004, COPUOS should continue to make progress in the development of a worldwide environmental monitoring strategy; protection of the environment and resource management; use of global navigation satellite systems to support sustainable development; telemedicine; and optimal use of space-based services for disaster management.

4. The European Union approved the method for establishing priorities within the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The action teams under the voluntary leadership of Member States had proved to be an effective mechanism for initiating implementation, that work was very important and should continue.

5. As more and more countries became involved in space activities, and given the unique characteristics of the space environment and space technology, it was essential to tackle complex issues. For example, in response to the increasing commercialization of outer space, the Office for Outer Space Affairs should continue its yearly workshops on space law. Furthermore, in order to address the problem of the increasing pollution caused by space debris, implementation of the space debris mitigation guidelines formulated by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) should continue and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should proceed with its initiative to develop a complementary set of mitigation guidelines.

6. Continued international cooperation in the field of space science and technology was essential. The European Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) initiative, had demonstrated the increasing need for international cooperation. Such initiatives contributed to achievement of the goals of the World Summit on Sustainable Development by improving people's lives and conserving natural resources. The adoption of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) 10-year implementation plan by 60 Governments and the European Commission in February 2005 had been a key event in that connection. Furthermore, in recognition of the importance of space technology for navigation, geopositioning and time synchronization, the European Union was developing the Galileo system, which, as a result of negotiations with the United States of America would be coordinated with the Global Positioning System (GPS) to strengthen and improve the use of civil satellite navigation worldwide.

7. ESA was playing an important role; it had cooperated with the European Union to develop

Galileo and GMES, and continued to promote the development of European space activities based on the common European strategy for space. It also played a worldwide role, for example in connection with UNISPACE III, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Space Station.

8. **Mr. Ma** Xinmin (China) said his delegation attached great importance to expanded international cooperation in activities related to the peaceful uses of outer space. While progress had been made in that regard, there were daunting challenges arising from the ever-expanding military uses of outer space, the increasing danger of its weaponization, and continuing research into and testing of space weapons, in violation of the principle of the peaceful use of outer space and the spirit of the Space Millennium Declaration adopted at UNISPACE III. COPUOS could count on his delegation's full support in its efforts to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space and develop a comprehensive and effective legal mechanism in that regard.

9. Turning to the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, he said that in order to ensure a positive role for the funding scheme provided for in the draft protocol, it was essential to conduct an in-depth study of the relationship between the protocol and the current legal regime on outer space, especially the interactive relationship between the two in actual operations. With regard to the possibility of the United Nations serving as supervisory authority, his delegation took note of the concerns of certain delegations and supported further consideration of that matter by the COPUOS.

10. His delegation attached great importance to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, and had actively participated in the work of the relevant action teams. It supported the creation of an international entity to coordinate and optimize the use of space-based services for disaster management, which would help developing countries, in particular, minimize human and material losses caused by natural disasters.

11. China had made great progress in the realm of space technology and space science research in the past year. The polar orbit satellite Tan Ce 2 and scientific experiment satellites such as the Shi Jian 6, A and B, satellites had been launched and the Shen Zhou VI manned spacecraft carrying two astronauts had successfully completed its five-day flight. His Government had also strengthened and expanded bilateral and regional cooperation. Over the next 10 years it would focus on the development of large-capacity, high-performance and long-life broadcast communication satellites. Research and development would be undertaken on a new generation of non-toxic, non-polluting, high-performance and low-cost delivery rockets, with a view to creating an Earth observation satellite system to monitor disasters and the environment composed primarily of a meteorological satellite series, a resource satellite series and ocean satellite series and a small-satellite constellation capable of continuous all-weather operations and high resolution. Study of the solar system and the Earth would continue as would manned space flights. A lunar orbiting flight project and deep space exploration project would also be launched.

12. Space science and technology and their applications played a growing role in the sustainable development of human society and could expedite economic and social development, especially in the developing countries. As a developing space-capable nation, China was willing to strengthen international cooperation and make its contribution to sustainable social and economic development at the global and regional levels.

13. **Ms. Holguin** (Colombia) reaffirmed her Government's commitment to the broadest cooperation in the use of space technology and stressed the need to accord priority to the transfer of knowledge and technology. She expressed concern about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, especially given the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. One important area for the application of space technology was the prediction and prevention of natural disasters through the improvement of early warning systems. Her Government supported the idea of establishing an international entity for global coordination of disaster response services. That would be in keeping with Member States' responsibility to improve the quality of life of current and future generations and protect the environment.

14. Her Government had hosted the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas in 2002, and looked forward to the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas to be held in July 2006 in Ecuador. Since 2002, her

Government had promoted regional cooperation in the application of space science and technology and the implementation of the Cartagena Declaration and Plan of Action, in particular with regard to education and training in the use of space technology. Seminars had also been organized in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and national bodies, most recently in September 2005 in Bogotá on the subject of satellite navigation applications. Work was also proceeding towards the establishment of a Colombian space committee.

15. She welcomed the proclamation of 2007 as International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year and recalled that in cooperation with United Nations Programme on Space Applications, her Government was developing an instrument to analyse the use of the geostationary orbit. She expressed concern at the near saturation of the geostationary orbit, use of which must be rationalized and made accessible to all countries, whatever their current technical capabilities, in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union and taking into account the needs of the developing countries.

16. **Mr. Ali Ahmad** (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to the report of COPUOS (A/60/20), highlighted the views expressed concerning the involvement of more countries in international cooperation in outer space; support for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications; the importance of remote sensing technology for sustainable development; resolution of the problem of space debris; and the role of space technology in the prediction, monitoring and mitigation of natural disasters in order to ensure a better preparedness for response. He also welcomed the convening of the symposium entitled "Space and archaeology" in June 2005. Work on the peaceful uses of outer space for the economic and scientific benefit of the human race was moving in a positive direction. He was nevertheless concerned by the continuing existence of programmes for the militarization of space and the use of outer space for purposes that were incompatible with global development and peace. It was therefore imperative that the international community should remain genuinely committed to the ongoing development of a clear legal framework to ensure that outer space was used for peaceful purposes only.

17. **Mr. Alvarez** (Cuba) said that his delegation commended China's successful launch of the Shenzhou-6 spacecraft. Outer space was of growing importance to improvement of the quality of life. Remote sensing and telecommunications had become indispensable in agriculture, education, environmental protection, natural resources management and navigation systems. Experiments carried out under microgravity conditions were an important component of scientific development. Meteorological observation from satellites mitigation was contributing to improved weather forecasting and the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters such as hurricanes, as well as efforts to address the devastating effects of climate change.

18. Three main principles should govern the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space. The first was the necessity of maintaining outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes, while enhancing international cooperation and the economic growth and sustainable development of all countries. That included the necessary transfer of advanced space technology by the more developed countries to the less developed, to bridge the gap between them. In that regard, Cuba rejected the attempts to amend the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, which did not take into consideration the interests of all States, and of developing countries in particular.

19. Second, Cuba was firmly opposed to the unleashing of an arms race in outer space, which would not only violate the principle of its being a common heritage of mankind, but would also gravely jeopardize collective security. The matter became all the more urgent as new military doctrines were put forward involving the development and deployment of new and costly weapons of destruction intended to promote the hegemonic domination of the most powerful over the rest of the inhabitants of the planet. His delegation reiterated its deep concern that some nuclear Powers, which were also spacefaring nations, were continuing to block the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, on the development of an international instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. The recommendation that, as a first practical step, States should agree to a moratorium on the deployment of weapons in outer space was therefore crucially important.

20. Third, Cuba agreed with the view that the existing legal regime was inadequate to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space. There was

thus an urgent need to adopt new mechanisms for the monitoring and verification of space law.

21. Cuba favoured strengthening COPUOS and its two Subcommittees, and believed that States should be encouraged to become observers or members. It attached special importance to the development of strategies aimed at minimizing the possible consequences of space debris. Greater attention must also be paid to collisions of space objects, particularly those with nuclear power sources. At the same time, there must be a determination of responsibility for adverse events. The strengthening of international and regional cooperation in the area of space research was of vital importance; such cooperation could be neither privatized nor restricted to a small group of developed States.

22. **Mr. Kazykhanov** (Kazakhstan) said that the use of outer space and the application of space technologies to promote sustainable development were important areas for international cooperation. Kazakhstan was in a position to cooperate actively because of its space launching pad in Baikonur and its participation in various international space projects that included the use of science and technology for the protection of the environment. Kazakhstan was also working with the Russian Federation on space and aviation technology and remote sensing. Furthermore, under its 2005-2007 national programme for the development of space activities, it had begun to build domestic spacecraft, and planned to develop a national geostationary communications and rebroadcasting satellite, KAZSAT, by the end of the year. Together with the Russian Federation, it was involved in a larger project to build a space rocket complex, "Baiterek", by 2008, and was considering building another space complex, "Ishim", to launch smaller spacecraft for civilian applications. Furthermore, it continued to work with the Russian Federation and Ukraine on the "Clipper-Zenith" piloted space shuttle, using the Baikonur infrastructure.

23. The global nature of environmental disasters — such as those in the Aral Sea and the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, or the natural disasters that had recently occurred elsewhere — required a radically new approach by the international community. Although grateful to the specialized agencies and donor countries for their assistance in the Aral Sea and Semipalatinsk regions, Kazakhstan believed that multilateral cooperation could be more effective, and it was therefore proposing a draft resolution on the rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region.

24. His delegation welcomed the recommendations in the COPUOS report relating to the development of regional and interregional cooperation, in particular regarding the establishment of regional space science and technology training centres under the auspices of the United Nations; the application of space systems to disaster management and environmental monitoring; remote sensing by satellite; and the proclamation of 2007 as the International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year. COPUOS should maintain its leading role in efforts to enhance space activities for peaceful purposes and the development of space law.

25. **Mr. Chaimonekol** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) expressed appreciation for the work of COPUOS in maintaining and advancing international cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space. As well as enriching fundamental knowledge of the universe, space science and technology could also guide humanity towards a deeper understanding of its own world. ASEAN took note of the recommendations and decisions in the report of COPUOS (A/60/20), particularly those relating to implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

26. Recognizing the need for regional and interregional cooperation in maintaining outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes, ASEAN had undertaken many intra-ASEAN projects, as well as projects involving other partners. The intra-ASEAN projects laid particular emphasis on exchange of knowledge and expertise through the ASEAN Subcommittee on Space Technology and Applications (SCOSA). At its 12th meeting, held in Indonesia on 5 and 6 August 2005, SCOSA had adopted new projects aimed at capacity-building and strengthening cooperation among ASEAN countries. ASEAN was continuing its efforts to promote the use of space technology for disaster detection, prevention, relief and rehabilitation. Singapore's Centre for Remote Imaging, Sensing and Processing (CRISP) had been closely involved in those efforts and, in June 2004, it had organized an ASEAN workshop on oil spill detection and monitoring, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

27. Cooperation between ASEAN and its dialogue partners, particularly Australia, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, had been covering such areas as urban environment identification, farming and water resources management. In addition, ASEAN was pleased with its emerging cooperation with India and hoped to develop a medium-term work programme with India on space technology cooperation. ASEAN attached no less importance to its cooperation with other partners, such as COPUOS, the Group on Earth Observations, the Committee on Earth Observing Satellites and the Asia-Pacific Advanced Network. In cooperation with the Malaysian Centre for Remote Sensing, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and ESCAP, ASEAN had jointly organized a workshop on Disaster Reduction through Effective Space Technology Utilization in the Asia Pacific Region, held in Kuala Lumpur on 24 and 26 May 2005, which had contributed to cooperation in the sharing of data on forest fires. ESCAP and his own Government had jointly hosted the Expert Meeting on Space Applications for Disaster Management between 25 and 28 July 2005 in Chiangmai, Thailand, aimed at reviewing the space-generated products and services that could support regional disaster management mechanisms. In addition, Malaysia and Thailand were in process of launching their national satellites, in 2005 and 2007 respectively.

28. As economic growth, social progress and cultural development in South-East Asia were cornerstones of ASEAN, it fully supported the maintenance of the peaceful uses of outer space as a way of empowering peoples and economies. ASEAN also supported continued international cooperation in identifying new areas where space technologies could be applied to sustainable development, particularly in the fields of telemedicine, education, natural resource management and disaster mitigation. ASEAN took note with great satisfaction of the concern of COPUOS to assist developing countries, which had led to the endorsement of a programme of workshops, training courses, symposia and conferences planned for 2005. ASEAN also believed that space science and applications should be restricted to peaceful uses that contributed to the advancement and common goals of mankind. While a distinction should be made between the peaceful uses of outer space being discussed in the Fourth Committee and the disarmament aspects being discussed in the First Committee, information-sharing and proper coordination between the two Committees were vital, given the interrelated nature of their tasks.

29. No country in the world was immune from natural disasters, which seemed to be increasing at an alarming rate. It was now quite apparent that humanity had to stand resolute and united, redoubling its efforts towards disaster prevention and preparedness. Work should continue on the use of available space technology to strengthen and link existing regional early warning systems. The possibility should also be explored of setting up a comprehensive global early warning system, and further work should be done to develop existing technology for tele-education to disseminate information, and promote disaster management, and preparedness. ASEAN was therefore encouraged by the request of COPUOS, in paragraph 57 of its report, that the ad hoc expert group should finalize the draft study on disaster management. ASEAN, for its part, had improved its response to disasters and was creating early warning systems to complement and contribute to the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System being developed by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

30. **Ms. Meyer** (Canada) said that her Government strongly supported the use of space by all nations for peaceful purposes; space represented an increasingly valuable resource in many sectors and must be protected so that its benefits would continue to accrue to all. Her Government was involved in a number of initiatives aimed at sharing the benefits of outer space, including the Geoscience for Andean Communities Project and the provision of satellite images to assist navigators in staying clear of drifting ice.

31. All States which had not yet done so should ratify or accede to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty). States should also consider extending the partial weapons ban found in that Treaty, as suggested by the Prime Minister of Canada during his address to the General Assembly in 2005. In that regard, she called for the establishment of "crosswalks" between the space-related work of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly. Likewise, COPUOS and the Conference on Disarmament must work together more closely on issues relating to outer space.

32. She welcomed the progress made at the most recent session of COPUOS, in particular the consensus reached by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the adoption of guidelines for the mitigation of orbital debris, in the context of a multi-year workplan. While the workplan did not address the concerns of all participating States, it was a major step forward in ensuring safe and secure access to outer space for all.

33. **Mr. Jaafar** (Malaysia) said that his Government was developing its own space capacity, within its limited means and was mindful of the potential of space technology to benefit developing countries. It was actively involved in regional cooperative endeavours and, at the international level, had been a leader of the action team on space-based communication services. Closer international cooperation between developed and developing countries was essential, especially in the transfer of technology and in technical assistance, in order to narrow the digital divide. Donor countries should, for instance, give more support to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, which was helping the developing countries to participate in the space activities proposed at the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

34. The issue of space debris remained a major cause of concern to Malaysia, especially as advances in technology made the introduction of defensive weapons into outer space a possibility. Such a development would not only exacerbate unimaginably the threat of space debris but would seriously undermine international efforts to ensure the continued peaceful use of outer space. An international legal agreement should be drawn up to prohibit the deployment of weapons in outer space.

35. The major natural disasters of recent years underscored the urgency of using space technology to predict, monitor and mitigate them, and space-based early warning systems, particularly, should be made accessible to developing countries at risk. Malaysia itself had been awakened to the need for disaster preparedness by the recent Indian Ocean tsunami, and expected soon to have an operational warning system, as well as a forest fire management plan utilizing remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) technologies.

36. As to its own development of space science and technology, Malaysia was working with the Republic of Korea on a second Earth observation satellite, RazakSAT, scheduled to be launched by the end of 2005, with a mission control centre being built to support its operation and with the national remote sensing centre, currently receiving data from various other satellites, as the main receiving station. Malaysia was also setting up a national observatory and was developing space-based telemedicine and tele-education programmes. In addition, a Malaysian astronaut would soon be launched into space under a joint programme with the Russian Federation focusing on science and education. His Government had set a five-year time frame for continued development of space technology infrastructure, which would allow it to contribute to regional initiatives and share knowledge with suitable partners in the region.

37. Malaysia was seriously committed to the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees as they promoted the peaceful uses of outer space and the use of space technology for the benefit of the world's people. That was the motivation for its interest in the chairmanship of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

38. **Ms. Lyubalina** (Russian Federation) said that peaceful activity in outer space must be regulated on a multilateral basis, and that the leading role of the United Nations, and in particular COPUOS, in developing a political and legal basis for human activity in outer space should be preserved and strengthened. The effectiveness and efficiency of the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees must be enhanced.

39. Her delegation wished to stress the need for outer space to be used for exclusively peaceful purposes. It was unacceptable to turn outer space into an arena for armed confrontation and an arms race. Her delegation called upon Member States to take full advantage of the unique potential of COPUOS to give comprehensive consideration to issues associated with maintaining outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

40. The Russian Federation confirmed its commitment to the progressive development of space law, and once again drew attention to its initiative for the development of a comprehensive convention on international space law within the framework of COPUOS, which had already been endorsed by a number of Member States. The adoption of such a

convention would make it possible to adapt international law governing activity in outer space to current realities and needs. The need to codify that branch of the law was becoming increasingly obvious in view of the expansion of human activities in outer space.

41. **Mr. Khudair** (Iraq) said that COPUOS had assumed an important role in focusing on the peaceful use of outer space and the harnessing of space technology to improve conditions on Earth, particularly where implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and the recommendations of UNISPACE III was concerned. In that context, he was confident that the outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Inter-Agency meeting on Outer Space Activities, to be held in Paris in January 2006, and the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in Tunis in November 2005, would contribute further to the positive steps being taken to coordinate activities relating to the beneficial use of space technology for the human race. Now in a new era as a fledgling democracy, Iraq shared the same concerns as its fellow developing countries and was eager to benefit fully from the information provided by space technology, not least in the area of sustainable development. It was therefore essential to extend the benefits of space technology to all developing countries, irrespective of their political and economic systems and cultural background, with a view to bridging the widening digital divide and countering the growing protectionist trend and selectivity in connection with the transfer of technology to the developing countries.

42. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America) observed that over the past year COPUOS and its Subcommittees, ably supported by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, had made a substantial contribution to promoting international space cooperation, an accomplishment that was a fitting tribute to the over four decades during which COPUOS had served as the only standing body of the United Nations concerned exclusively with the peaceful uses of outer space, and the sharing of benefits from space exploration.

43. Over the course of 2005, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space had made significant progress in identifying options for establishing an international framework of goals and recommendations for the safety of planned nuclear-power-source applications in space. The joint workshop to be held by the Subcommittee and the International Atomic Energy Agency concurrently with the Subcommittee's 2006 session, should help to determine how to proceed in developing that framework. The Subcommittee had also made significant progress on space debris mitigation, having agreed on a two-year workplan to develop a document based on the IADC space debris mitigation guidelines. The IADC guidelines were solid, technically based measures that any nation could adopt as part of its space activities; the development of voluntary guidelines within COPUOUS was, of course, also useful. The United States supported the IADC orbital debris mitigation guidelines, and its agencies were well along in implementing them. The Subcommittee had, further taken a welcome decision to follow the preparations for the International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year, which would be a truly international endeavour focusing worldwide attention on the need to cooperate in solar-terrestrial physics.

44. The Legal Subcommittee had also made progress on a range of topics, including developments relating to a possible space assets protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. Private activities in space had become increasingly important in recent years, and such a protocol would facilitate commercial financing for space activities. The Subcommittee had, in addition, advanced in its review of the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects on the United Nations Registry established under the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, with a view to identifying the common elements.

45. The June 2005 session of COPUOS had made substantial progress in considering the spin-off benefits of space exploration, as well as the greater role it could play in promoting international cooperation to ensure that outer space was maintained for peaceful purposes. It had also focused usefully on the question of space and society, with a special emphasis on education of the general public.

46. In connection with the draft resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, his delegation noted that the Group of Asian States had yet to nominate candidates for the Bureau of COPUOS for 2006-2007. It urged the Bureau to ensure that the Group submitted its nominations for inclusion in the draft resolution, so that the Committee and its Subcommittees, would be able to begin their work on time at their next sessions.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.